

Message Text

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17

ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 EB-04 FEA-01 OES-02 COME-00 INT-05

AID-05 /089 W

----- 078814

R 121520Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4172

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USUN NEW YORK 904

CONFIDENTIAL CAPE TOWN 0762

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SF, XA

SUBJECT: SAG OFFICIAL DISCLOSES "DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE" IN

BLACK AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND U.S.

1. IN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN WEEKEND ARGUS NOVEMBER 9,
DR. ESCHEL RHOODIE, SAG SECRETARY FOR INFORMATION, SAID HE
HAD BEEN MAKING CLANDESTINE TRIPS TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND
U.S. IN ORDER TO PUT SOUTH AFRICA'S CASE TO LEADING FIGURES
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IN THOSE COUNTRIES.

2. RHOODIE REVEALED HE HAD RECENTLY VISITED IVORY COAST, SENEGAL AND U.S. HE SAID HE HAD ATTENDED BANQUET WITH IVORY COAST MINISTERS IN ABIDJAN. IMPLYING HE HAD MADE ADDITIONAL TRIPS, RHOODIE TOLD ARGUS REPORTER THAT IN VARIOUS TRIPS TO BLACK AFRICAN COUNTRIES HE HAD MET NEWS-PAPER EDITORS, UNIVERSITY PEOPLE, BUSINESSMEN, AND GOVERNMENT MINISTERS. AS PART OF SAG'S EXPANDED OVERSEAS INFORMATION PROGRAM, DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION WAS CONTEM-PLATING INVITING TO SOUTH AFRICA NEWSPAPER EDITORS FROM THREE TO FOUR UNNAMED AFRICAN COUNTRIES. RHOODIE QUOTED AS SAYING, "WE ARE AT A PRETTY DELICATE STAGE IN OUR OPERATION NOW, BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU THERE IS NO LOSS OF IMPETUS IN THE CONTACT WHICH IS TAKING PLACE."

3. ACCORDING TO RHOODIE, DURING RECENT VISIT TO U.S. HE MET WITH SENATORS KENNEDY, MUSKIE, GRIFFIN, AND BYRD, AND "BETWEEN 25 AND 30" AMERICAN CONGRESSMEN FROM BOTH REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC PARTIES. RHOODIE ALSO STATED HE HAD MET PRESIDENT FORD IN DETROIT. RHOODIE SAID HE FOUND PEOPLE IN U.S. "ARE NOW PREPARED TO LISTEN TO WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY. THIS IS AN ENORMOUS ADVANCE. PREVIOUSLY ONE COULD NOT EVEN GET TO SEE THEM AT ALL." REASON FOR THIS, RHOODIE CLAIMED, WAS THAT AMERICANS NOW GETTING MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA, AND BECAUSE OF IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIC METALS LIKE URANIUM AND TITANIUM, WHICH SOUTH AFRICA COULD PROVIDE.

4. COMMENT: IN VIEW OF CONCERN WHICH PRIME MINISTER VORSTER AND FONMIN MULLER HAVE EXPRESSED TO US ABOUT NEED TO MAINTAIN ABSOLUTE SECRECY REGARDING SAG'S CONTACTS WITH BLACK AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS, RHOODIE'S DISCLOSURE IS PUZZLING AND DISCONCERT-ING. EITHER HE AND MINFORMATION MULDER ARE SEEKING CREDIT HERE FOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN BETTERING RELATIONS WITH AFRICAN STATES AND U.S., OR THEY UNAWARE OF VORSTER'S DESIRE FOR EXTREMELY QUIET DIPLOMACY. WHILE WE IN NO POSI-TION TO KNOW WHETHER ARGUS STORY WILL BE PLAYED OUTSIDE SOUTH AFRICA OR WHAT EFFECT IT MIGHT HAVE IF PUBLICIZED ABROAD, IT WOULD SEEM THAT BALLYHOO BY RHOODIE OF "SECRET PEACE OFFENSIVE" CAN ONLY BE INIMICAL TO SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERESTS. ONE NEEDS ONLY TO RECALL DAMAGE DONE TO DIALOGUE

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EFFORTS SEVERAL YEARS AGO AS RESULT OF INDISCREET BOASTING BY SAG.

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